

SOUTHWEST FISHERIES SCIENCE CENTER
THIRD QUARTER REPORT-FY 2002
For the period April 1, 2002 through June 30, 2002

SUBMITTED BY: John Hunter, Division Director, Fisheries Resources Division

Title of Accomplishment or Milestone: Summary of the 2001 U.S. North and South Pacific albacore troll fisheries.

Purpose of Activity: Collect, summarize and distribute data essential to the assessment of Pacific albacore stocks and for monitoring fishery performance.

Background: Catch data obtained from west coast states, logbook data collected from cooperating fishermen and length-frequency data obtained through port sampling from U.S. troll and baitboat vessels operating in the Pacific Ocean are routinely processed by the SWFSC for use in stock assessments. Logbooks are provided to fishermen who record fishing information and provide the information to the SWFSC. Length-frequency data are collected through a Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission contract to Washington, Oregon and California state fisheries agencies, and from NMFS offices in American Samoa and Hawaii.

Description of Accomplishment and Significant Results: Data for the 2000-2001 South Pacific and 2001 North Pacific fishing seasons were processed, made available to scientists to monitor the fishery and to assess the condition of the stocks, and summarized in a report for distribution to the public. The 2001 U.S. catch of North Pacific albacore was 11,170 metric tons (t), a decrease from the 9,640 t caught in 2000. Areas fished by the North Pacific fleet in 2001 were distributed west of the International Dateline early in the season, off California, Washington and Oregon during mid season and again in offshore areas and off California late in the season. The 2000-2001 U.S. catch of South Pacific albacore was 2,128 t, a decrease from 2,562 t in the 1999-2000 season. While areas fished in 2001 and 2000 were very similar, areas of high catch in 2001 extended further south than in 2000. The catch-per-unit effort, in number of fish per day fished, for the North Pacific increased substantially from 39 fish per day in 2000 to 68 fish per day in 2001. The catch-per-unit effort in the South Pacific decreased substantially from 70 fish per day in the 1999-2000 season to 48 fish per day in the 2000-2001 season. Average size of fish in the North Pacific catch was virtually the same in 2000 and 2001 at approximately 69 cm. In the South Pacific, average size decreased slightly from 73 cm in the 1999-2000 season to 71 cm in the 2000-2001 season.

Significance of Accomplishment (e.g., to the Center, to Management and to NMFS Strategic Plan Goals): Logbook data are collected under the High-Seas Fishing Compliance Act of 1995. Data collected are being used to monitor the fisheries and for assessing the condition of the stocks. This is part of the NMFS strategic plan goal of building/maintaining sustainable fisheries.

Problems: None.

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